

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO MESA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN IN

SUBJECT: CHASNALA MINE DISASTER - PRESS REPORTS

1. THE INDIAN PRESS OF JANUARY 23 FOCUSES ON THE RESCUE OPERATIONS NOW GOING ON IN THE FIRST HORIZON OF THE CHASNALA MINE. THESE EFFORTS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN INTENSIFIED WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A SECOND CAGE WHICH HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE TO LOWER 100 MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY SQUAD TO THE FIRST HORIZON TO UNDERTAKE RECLAMATION WORK. SO FAR 18 BODIES HAVE BEEN RECEOVERED FROM THE FIRST HORIZON WHERE 66 MINERS WERE TRAPPED. WHILE MOST OFFICIALS STATE CHANCES OF FINDING SURVIVORS ARE NIL, THE APERS CONTINUE TO ALLUDE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING AIR POCKETS IN THE UPPERMOST PANEL IN THE FIRST HORIZON. RESCUE EFFORTS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY CONTINUAL SEEPAGE.

2. SEVERAL NEW DELHI PAPERS ATTRIBUTE MR. S. PRASAD, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MINE SAFETY AS SAYING THAT THE 309 MINERS TRAPPED IN THE SECOND HORIZON STILL UNDER WATER MUST HAVE MET THEIR WATERY GRAVE AND WERE BURIED UNDER HEAPS OF SILT AND MUD.

3. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES ALSO QUOTES MR. PRASAD AS SAYING THAT "GOD HELPING IT SHOULD NOT TAKE MORE THAN A WEEK TO TAKE OUT ALL

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THE BODIES FROM THE FIRST HORIZON AND ANOTHER WEEK TO COMPLETE THE

RECOVERY WORK THEREIN. BUT THE RECOVERY WORK INSIDE THE ENTIRE MINE WOULD TAKE MONTHS TO COMPLETE".

4. ACCORDING TO THE STATESMAN MR. PRASAD WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AIR POCKETS IN THE FIRST HORIZON BUT IT WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO RECOVER ALL THE BODIES FROM THE SECOND HORIZON. WHEN ASKED TO COMPARE THE SITUATION AT CHASNALA WITH THAT OF THE BURRADHEMO DISASTER IN 1966 WHERE 11 SURVIVORS WERE FOUND AFTER 19 DAYS, MR. PRASAD IS QUOTED AS SAYING" THAT AT CHASNALA THE APPROACHES TO THE UNDERGROUND WORKINGS THROUGH THE STAFT WERE LOST AS WATER ROSE TO A DEPTH OF 800 FEET. WE HAD TO REST CONTENT WITH THE PUMPING OUT OF WATER. IN BURRADHEMO WATER HAD RISEN IN THE SHAFT BUT SINCE THE WORKINGS WERE NOT SO DEP AS IN CHASNALA, THE AIR PRESSURE INSIDE AIR POCKETS WERE NOT TOO HIGH".SCHNEIDER

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